

12 November 1954

Dr. Philip Edwards
Communicable Disease Center
P. O. Box 185
Chamblee, Georgia

Dear Dr. Edwards:

I have been asked to attempt to organize a symposium on "Potential Contributions of Microbial Genetics to some Problems of Epidemiology" for the 1955 SAB meeting which is scheduled for May 8 - 12 in New York City.

I believe that a discussion on the potential significance of newer information in the field of microbial genetics to epidemiological problems would be quite stimulating, even though actual experimental evidence for the significance of some of these phenomena in vivo is so far admittedly quite meager. I would visualize a symposium of this type as a series of, I hope, constructive speculations based on experimental data in vitro and, if available, in vivo which should be reviewed to a sufficient extent to give the non-specialist some idea about the phenomena that are being discussed. Naturally, in discussing any epidemiological problem the role of the host cannot be minimized, but I thought that for the purpose of this particular symposium, we could restrict ourselves to a discussion of potential changes in the parasite population.

It seems to me that the following speakers and titles might best serve this purpose:

- (1) Braun, W. "Bacterial population changes (mutation and selection) and epidemiology."
- (2) Garber, E. "Auxotrophy and epidemiology."
- (3) Hotchkiss, R. or Austrian, R. "Transformation and epidemiology."
- (4) Edwards, P. "Recombination and transduction in relation to epidemiology."
- (5) Bryson, V. or Finland, M. "Epidemiological considerations based on studies of antibiotic resistance."

In some preliminary correspondence with Dr. J. Lederberg, who unfortunately will not be able to attend the meeting, Joshua first suggested that I ask you to participate in this symposium and I regard this as a most excellent suggestion. I feel that your participation would enhance the value of such a symposium significantly because aside from your unique experience in relation

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to the experimental and theoretical aspects of the problem you would aid us in avoiding a too one-sided balance in favor of those whose background is primarily on the genetic side. I recognize that your primary experimental interest has been in problems of transduction. However, I believe that the potential significance of recombination as revealed in the E. coli studies should not be neglected entirely on such a program. Therefore, I would like to ask you whether, in case of acceptance, you would be willing to briefly discuss recombination too, or whether you would prefer to have these closely related matters discussed by someone like Dr. Aleck Bernstein of Dr. Lederberg's group.

Please let me know as soon as possible whether you would be willing to participate in such a symposium and whether you have any additional suggestions regarding organization, speakers and topics. Should you be willing to participate, and I sincerely hope so, I would suggest that all of us exchange, at an early date, a very brief outline of material to be covered, so that we might avoid overlapping discussions.

With best regards,

Sincerely,

WERNER BRAUN

WB/bsp

cc; Dr. Lederberg
Dr. Catlin